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With respect to the *Canwyllau Cyrph*, or Corpse Candles, noticed in the subsequent communication, it may be proper to premise, that the superstitious notion is at present almost confined to the Diocese of St. David's, where it is a popular belief, that, a short time before the decease of a person, a light is seen issuing from the sick bed, and taking its course to the church-yard along the very track, which the funeral is afterwards to pursue.

* *

POPULAR SUPERSTITIONS OF THE WELSH.

The inhabitants of rude and mountainous countries are more generally affected with superstition than those, who dwell in plains and well-cultivated regions. That the scenery of a country has a considerable degree of influence on the habits of the natives, is indisputable. Hence the manners of mountaineers are more hardy, robust, and impetuous, than those of lowlanders, and their imaginations,

—————"Darken'd by their native scenes,
Create wild images and phantoms dire,
Strange as their hills, and gloomy as their storms."

This is exemplified in the mountain-inhabitants of Britain—the Scottish highlander, and the Welsh mountaineer,—to both of whom certain superstitious customs and opinions are peculiar, although resembling each other considerably in their general outline. It is to those of the latter that I wish now to fix my attention, and I leave the comparison to your readers. In a curious little work, entitled "A Relation of Apparitions and Spirits, in the County of Monmouth, and the Principality of Wales," by the Rev. Edmund Jones, we find all that can be said upon the subject; and, although the ardent zeal of the author to maintain the actual existence of ghosts, goblins, fairies, &c. &c. is absurd and ridiculous, yet his book contains a tolerably distinct account of the leading features of Welsh superstitions. By our author all unbelievers in the appearance of spectres and spirits are termed Sadducees, and their incredulity on this point is equivalent, with him, to a disbelief in a future state. Hearken how our divine argueth in favour of his doctrine:—"They are chiefly
" women, and men of weak and womanish understandings, who
" speak against the accounts of spirits and apparitions. In some
" women this comes from a certain proud fineness, excessive delicacy, and a superfine disposition, which cannot bear to be
" disturbed with what is strange and disagreeable to a vain spirit.

“ But why should the daughters of mother Eve be so averse to hear of their great adversary Satan, with whom she first conversed, and whom she first believed, and was deceived by him?” Why, indeed! This is a question I will not undertake to answer; and I give the Reverend Mr. Edmund Jones all the credit due to him for reasoning so subtle and unanswerable.

The superstitious creed of the Welsh comprises a staunch belief in the existence of witches, ghosts, goblins, and fairies, with a due proportion of good and bad spirits. To these may be added the creation of certain wild fantasies, peculiar, perhaps, to themselves. These consist of—

1st,—Dogs of the Sky (*Cwn Wybir*), or, as they are sometimes denominated, Dogs of Hell (*Cwn Annwn*). These terrific animals are supposed to be devils under the semblance of hunting dogs (of what particular breed or species, deponent saith not), and they are usually accompanied by fire, in some form or other. Their appearance is supposed to indicate the death of some friend or relative of the person, to whom they show themselves. N.B. They have never been known to commit any mischief on the persons of either man or woman, goat, sheep, or cow, &c.

2ndly,—Corpse Candle (*Canwyll Corph*). This apparition (for apparition it is, and of a lighted tallow candle too, laugh who may!) is also the forerunner of death. Sometimes it appears in the form of a stately flambeau, flaming bluely, and stalking about uninvited from place to place; and sometimes it appears in the hand of the spectre of the person, whose fate it foretells.

3rdly,—*Cyhiraeth*—a doleful, foreboding noise before death, heard by the nearest of kin to the person about to depart.

4thly,—The *Knockers*—a very good-natured, fortunate sort of beings, whose business it is to point out, by a peculiar kind of bumping, a rich vein of metal ore, or any other subterraneous treasure. They are highly respected, and are deemed nearly allied to the Fairies.

I have now enumerated the several kinds of superstitious objects held in awe by our countrymen. At a future opportunity I propose making such extracts from Mr. Edmund Jones's work, as will illustrate the actions of the several species of spirits. For the present I must conclude, merely observing that Mr. Jones has treated of several minor spirits, of whom he has related some very interesting and important facts.

T. R.

The custom, of which some account is given in the following article, is still retained in some parts of Wales, where the return of All Saints' Eve continues to be marked by many rustic festivities. But much of the pristine humour of this ancient festival is undoubtedly lost: and in many places all vestiges of the ceremonial have vanished. Some account of the custom of lighting fires (*coelcerthi*) on November eve has already appeared in the CAMBRO-BRITON*.

* *

ALL-SAINTS' EVE.

There is a custom peculiar to Wales,—and peculiar, I believe, to Wales alone,—the origin of which I should imagine to be of some antiquity. I allude to the observance of the eve of All-Saints as a festival and holiday. The institution of the custom is readily accounted for. In the earlier and darker, and more barbarous ages, certain days were set apart for the performance of particular mythological ceremonies, and on “All-Saints’ Eve” thanksgivings were offered up to the Deity for the fruits of harvest. The predilection, the Welsh have ever retained for many of the rude habits of their forefathers, has preserved, amongst other customs, the festivities of All-Saints’ Eve, and the evening of this day is spent in mirth and gladness. Bonfires are kindled, labour is suspended, the villagers assemble, and the young and active dance to the music of the harp, or pass their time in the exercise of athletic and rustic games. I well remember with what eager joy I was wont, during my boyish days, to hail the approach of this festival: I always spent it at “the Rector’s;” and, although some years have elapsed since that joyous period, the recollection of it is yet vivid in my memory, and will never be forgotten. There is a pleasure in permitting the imagination to dwell thus on the scenes of early life; particularly if we have, by the chances of fate, been separated from them, and from all whom time and memory have endeared to us. It is an impulse, with which Nature inspires us, and in an obedience to which the mind is agreeably and not unworthily employed. My absence from Wales has not afforded me an opportunity of witnessing whether the ceremonies of All-Saints’ Eve are observed with all their pristine celebrity; but, as far as report goes, I am given to understand that they are. And we can almost hope that luxury and refinement will never penetrate into the mountain wilds of Cambria, to deprive the honest inhabitants of their innocent and favourite enjoyments.

T. R.

* No. 5, p. 172. See also *Cambrian Register*, vol. i. p. 307.